

THE
COUNTERS
DISCOVRSE,

With it's Varlets Discovery,
Being a merry Dialogue betwixt
three cunning Rookes, *Viz.*

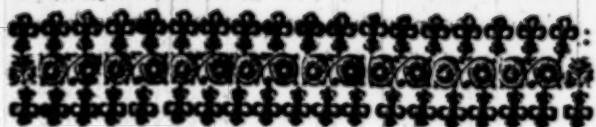
Tenterhooke the Serjeant, *Catchall* the Yeoman, and
Spy-all their Setter.



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Tenterhooke the Serjeant, *Catchall* the Yeoman, and
Spiall their Setting Dogge.

Spiall.

HOW now *madshaver*, what *circumference* and
perambulation must I goe make to day? I
led you a brave dance yesterday, how wee
traversed the Ciry as so many boote-halers to get in
prizes! never did a Dunkirk Frigat watch a New-
castle Collier, nor a jealous wife a wanton husband,
nor yet a Cat a poore Mouse, as we looked after
desperate debtors.

Catchall. Faith *Spiall* I tell thee thou art one that
standest in no need of perspective glasses, for thy
eyes are as piercing as a Hawkes, and as dangerous as
a Basiliskes, thou puttest a prodigall spend-thrift to

as many turnings as a Woodcock hath windings, and thou hast one quality more ; thou art no kinne to the Snail, nor yet to the Dormouse ; a flie-boat or a Turkish galley is not quicker at Sea than thy indefatigable legs be on land, sure thou wearest some Goose-grasse in thy shooes, for Physitians say that Herbe will keep those that weare it from weariness.

Spiall. Poxe of your jesting for me, I am sure your hands would doe little without my eyes, never did a poore Mill-horse tyre himselfe out of his skin, and labour out his owne eyes for others profit, more than I doe for yours, and to speak truth, as the poore Mill-horse is at last devoured by my Lord Maiors Hounds ; so are such as we are by his Serjeants : what, will you give us any thing this morning? for I protest I am Crop-sick of yesterdaies Physick, I gave my selfe a vomit, but without the direction of any Quack-salver, and now a Modicum this morning would be a generall restorative to my watry stomach.

Catchall. Well *Spiall*, let us goe see our Grand-Seignior Master *Tenterhooke*, for he made a private composition last night betwixt two wilde mad-brain fellows, that will maintaine him and us too this fortnight ; if he had not clapt in just as he did, I had ended the businesse, and pocketted the Cash up my selfe, but come, we will to him, and never did a Bartholmew-faire beggar more earnestly set upon a Gentleman passenger for an almes, than we will invade him for a good bit this morning, to satisfie our hungry mawes.

Spiall. With all my heart, and I know hee will bid me welcome, for I can tell him of two nests of
great

great wilde-fowle which are yet very fat, I know their haunts, I spyed out their taking wing to flie abroad, I followed, and saw them housed, and like an olde setting dog, I traced them back againe to their sleeping holes, doe you think that this newes will not bee welcome to M *Tenterhooke*? I faith I think you and he could as ill subsist without me, as a new upset Apothecary could without the custome of some well practised Physitian. Ile assure you, if the officers of the Counter had any charity in them, they would alwayes remember such as I am for their speciall Benefactors, and upholders; I have sent them in five or sixe couple of rich feathered fowles in a weeke, which they have pulled bare, and devoured in a week after; no Poulterer can sooner unplume a Partridge than those Coysterels can a prodigall youngster in the poultry; yonder is the man we looked for, he is stirring betimes, I beleve he is going about some Ambuscado, come, we will up to him: how doe you Master *Tenterhooke*?

Tenterhooke. What my two Harpies? well met, you could not have come in a fitter time, I have imployment for you both presently, come, there is Cash for you both aforchand, and we will be joviall, doe we but intercept this Canary bird; he lies in Lime-streete, and we will lay strong lime-twigs for him; *Gatchall*, I hope your fingers are not soaped, and *Spiall*, your eyes are cleered this morning, are they not? If we surround him, never was a narrow piece of Kersies stretched more up the Tenters, then he shall be by our Tallons, you must be sure to watch narrowly, he is an easie Gul without a sword, or stout company, he goes in Plush, and Ile warrant you

we will make him blush, there be three passages to secure, *Spiall*, walke you by such an Alley, and there stand as if you were making water, but have an eye to such a doore, if any such rich Capparizon'd younker sallies out, presently withdraw you to us to such a Taverne, we will about him like so many Wolves, and feast our selves upon his Cash, or his Carcase.

Catchall. What say you *Spiall* to this, is not this brave hunting, this is better than beating of Hares, or threshing, and hedging in the Countrey for two pence a day and porridge, what though we be cursed? yet you know the Foxe then fares best; Is not this *Man-catching* a brave trade? Those who are called spirits, that catch men for new plantations, are meere butter-flies to us; if once we utter but our terrible Apologie, *The King greets you*, into what a shaking fit puts it men into, our pressing men into the Counter, is more dreadfull than a Constables is into the Kings service.

Spiall. Tush *Catchall*, now I am feed with good silver, I am ready for any villany, I would not spare to betray my owne father: what though we be counted Varlets? it is nothing, I would venture upon the stoutest *Milford-lane* man with as good a stomach, as a hungry dog would upon a creeping pudding. He deale plainly firrah with thee, we in our offices must be like theeves upon the high-way side, have no respect of persons, command all to stand, all is fish that comes to the net with us, rich, or poore.

Tenterhook. Doe but observe what a confession the young gallant will make when he is taken, oh how I rejoyce to heare him, he does it in hope to finde mercy at our hands, alas, it is much like that which
Thieves

Thieves make at the place of execution, without any pitty or hope of pardon: A man may as well looke for mercy at the hands of an Argiere pirate, as at a Serjeants, for we are as cruell by land, as they are by Sea, they passe them away to the Gallies, and we to the Gallowes. When we cope such a Spanke at any time, the first place of debating the matter, is, if hee be well lined with monies, the next Taverne, but if he be a bird but of an ordinary flight, then the next rotten, olde, darke Alehouse, our intent is there to gorge our selves upon him, as so many Carrion Crowes, and to fish out of him whether he be in further danger or not, and sometimes it is to send in the interim to the Creditor, to give him intelligence that *long looked for is come at last*, and to bid to haste to the Counter, and enter the action against him, for that is an usuall trade with us, first to arrest a man, and then enter the action a little antidedated, that our knavery may be concealed.

Catchall. Tush, that is as usuall as it is for young wenches, first to adventure a great belly, and when they are sped, then to procure a Licence, but how we squeeze him in the interim, he might have sitten as easily bare buttockt upon thornes all the while, as to have stayed there amongst us, if we give him liberty to send Letters to any of his friends, *Spiall*, or he that we send, knowes how to protract time, or goe about other businesse, or to say they were not at home, or else he would goe againe anon to their houses, and all this the poore gull takes for great curtesies from us, when it is nothing lesse, for we doe it either to have the longer time to feast our selves in, or else to gaine monies of him for keeping him as we say for going to the

the Counter, or to put him into the greater feares, while we sit and laugh at him.

Tenterbooke. This is all as true as Gospel, but my nimble villaines, there is more you know in it than all this; you know a priviledge that I have beyond all this, for if I smell that he is well lined with gold no Chymist hath more dexterity to extract sophisticated gold from other Minerals, than I have to scrue mettall out of his feathered pockets, I have a trick under the vizzard of extraordinary curtesie and favour to drill this Bussard home to my rooste, where I finde lodging at ten shillings a night, and dyet with a shoulder of Mutton, and a Capon, at thirty shillings with the sauce; Vintners reckonings are often paid with brawling and quarrelling, but I have all paid me with hearty thankes, and a prayer to boote, to be good unto him, if in case I see he will be fetched off, I am sure one or two daies to keep out of sight of purpose, that his friends may spend the freer, and his score run the higher; besides when I do come in, I make as though I was sorry for the Gentlemans trouble, when as it is a thousand to one, but I have been entring some other new action against him, or else informed some of his other Creditors to doe it while he is in Limbo, and then he and his friends will pay any thing to quit him of my house; when alas poore bird, I have agreed with another of my brethren to take him in againe as soone as I am discharged, beside all this I have a devise to goe to his Creditors, to desire them not to be seen in the businesse as yet, telling them also, that if they keep off, and not cloze too soon with him, they may have their full debt and charges, when as all this while I doe
work

worke only to spin out my prisoner to the highest straine, as Nuns doe fine Lawne, so that you Varlets ye see, how I like a cruel devill torment this poore soule : Is not this a brave trade my nimble dexterous slaves ? & how often have I at the upshot got good fees for you also ?

Spiall. And doe you think great Commander, that all comes into your purse ? No Ile warrant you, for if once I have found out but a debtors lodging, he shall not want for visits, for once or twice a weeke I come and salute him, where I am sure to be well see'd with an Angell at least for concealment of him from your clutches; besides good Sack and Clarret, and oftentimes good victuals too, for most men love liberty, and they will try all conclusions before that of a Gaole, when once they are there, they give themselves lost men, and are as sure bound, as Gally-slaves bee to their Oares.

Catchall. I protest I hold the City like a racket Court, and debtors to be like Balls, *Spiall* throwes them into our hands, and we bandy them from one hazzard to the other, most commonly under line, so that all that come in, are either tost and lost, or else broken and spoiled with our violent usage, we are like the gamesters, make sport at their misery, there are as few debtors come sound off from our hands, as there doe sound wenches from old bawdy-houses, or good horses from an old horse-courfers stable, or full dishes of meat from a dinner amongst old Soldiers in a beleaguerd towne. A Mildew rots not more sheep, then wee consume mens estates, what Caterpillars are to fruit, that are we to prodigals.

Tenterbooke. We may (I hope) speak merfily amongst our selves (old Rogues) I hold the City like a Wildernesse, and we be the beasts of prey, if Usurers be Tigers, and Attornies be Leopards, Clarkes and Sollicitors be Foxes and Badgers, your Informers and Promoters Whelps and Beagles, your Justices Clarkes as Cats, and if Brokers bee

Wolves and Beares, yet it is the strong number of Serjeants, Yeomen, and Setters that be the Lions and Mastives, if it were not for us, you should see Guildhall as empty of complainers, as Westminster Hall is in a long Vacation, or a dangerous pest-time, we finde all those work, therefore all the rest are in fee with us; what quick returne have we foure dayes in a weeke at Guild-hall; and 'it would seeme strange if we should not be well f'd, as long as the Sheriffes keepe open house; I tell you Magpies cannot feed better in a full Cherry Garden, then we doe there.

Spy-all. There's no feare of our thriving as long as men can borrow money, and forfeit their day of payment; I have *Tenterhooke*, a list of mad shavers that will fall into your hands ere long, but all the mischief is, they live in fortified places, such as are Milford-lane, Ramme-Alley, Chancery-lane, Grayes-Inne-lane, Charter-house, Great Saint Bartholomewes, the little Minories, Saint Cathelines Liberty, and the Tower freedome, if you dare make your approaches upon these Bulwarkes, and enter a strong battery, you may be sure of prizes enough.

Tenterhooke. Poxe take you, doe you jeere us? the name of those Garrisons how it startles me, I once had an enterprize upon one of those forts, and though the enemy had no intelligence a long time, nay I had possession of my Captive, but suddenly the alarme was taken, or all the women were as ready as they be in the Isles of *Jersey* and *Garnsey*, or in the Ile of *Wight*, upon the discovery of a French or Spanish Navie, and fought most desperately, so that I was forc'd to foregoe my purchase, and glad I came off with life, you shall assoone perswade a theefe to goe up Holborne Hill, and hang himsele at Tyburne, as to get mee against any of those Citadels againe.

Catch-all. Let me have one passage with you amongst the rest, I had a large fee once given me, when I was Yeoman to Serjeant *Snap-all*; to adventure upon that narrow Sconce called

called *Ram-Alley*. We had our prize that we were for, but before we could get off, we were invironed by the enemies forces that lay in Ambuscado, but we were so imprison'd, so sentenc'd, so shav'd, so trimm'd, so annointed, so washed, so flashed, and gashed, that had we not stunk so miserably, I look't for no other preferment then to have beene slic'd out for steakes for a breakefast; but at last it was generally resolved on, that seeing we were such stinking Carrion, wee were fitter for Fishes or Duckes then for men, and so in a desperate manner, we were flung over the Castle walls into the water, either to swimme or drowne, I never was in such hot service before, and will never adventure it the second time; see the markes they gave me on my face, head, hands, limbes, and buttockes. Ile rather turne futurer to my Lord Majors kennell of hounds, and be bound all my life to carry guts to the Beares for a penny a day, then ever be pressed upon that thanklesse service againe.

Tenterhooke. Come, come, theres no gaines without paines, sometimes we are hard put to it, but however we get something by th'hand, we have as many cheating trickes as a dancing Beare, though some escape, yet 'tis not one of an 100. Well, lets heare some newes, what is there any stirring?

Spy-all. There was a rumor the other day, but I hope 'tis but a report, that our Deanes should be searched, and our Officers examined, about unjust fees, and unlawfull imprisonment, 'twas said too that the Serjeants should be reduc'd to their pied-party-coloured-coats, and to answer to all such prisoners as should make just complaints against them, and to give satisfaction to the parties wronged, 'twas reported likewise that prisoners should pay but two pence a night for their lodging, and not above four pence a meale, and that Serjeants should not arrest on the Lords day, and such as would not weare such coats, should be put out of office, and many such hard Impositions.

Tenterhook. S'foot, if this be true, Ile goe sell my place forthwith, for if all these Injunctions be laid upon us, I shal nere keep them, and therefore it's best to get something for it in time; some locusts cannot live in Israel, nor such Caterpillars be suffered in a reformed Kingdome, wee know what hazzards we have runne, and if we should be called to an account for them, we had better flee away then stay; as great as our selves have done so: besides, there be such store of Protections out, that we know not how to seize upon a man for feare of lost labour. I met with two such this last weeke; well lets make hay while the Sun shines, I am afraid of the worst, if such a Leather-fac'd fellow, as I or thou art, should but be brought into question, our very downe-looks would halfe hang us, a bleare-ey'd man had as good gaze upon so many shining Suns at once in their full lustre, as you or I view that great Parliament at midday: well, I am for the countrey, Ile buy a little Farme and live thereon, and repent me for all my former iniquities, farewell.

Catch-all. Will he so soon cashiere himselfe? sure he has heard of some ill to that company of Varlets, but firrah *Spy-all*, what shall you and I doe? thou mayest have as good an head to advise well as thou hast eyes to spiewell.

Spy-all. Well, if you will be ruled by me, goe you to *Gregory*, and see that in case you come into his hands as you are doubtfull you shall, that he should quickly turne you from earth to your great Patron in hell, for that will be your habitation, you that put so many into dens, 'tis fit that you should live in one your selfe.

Catch-all. And what will you doe you mad slave?

Spy-all. Who, I'le warrant you I am not to seeke, I'le post into Italy and carch frogs, and present them to the Duke of *Parma*, for Netherlandish Ducks, let me alone. Well for this time,

Farewell.

FINIS.